

SENATE RESOLUTION 29

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to honor the March of Dimes on the occasion of the organization's seventy-fifth anniversary.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pay tribute to the March of Dimes, which, for seventy-five years, has been saving the lives of babies through scientific research and clinical and public policy advances; and

WHEREAS, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis (NFIP), better known as the March of Dimes, to fight polio; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to eradicate the debilitating disease, NFIP, led by its president, Basil O'Connor, established a number of local chapters and scientific committees to raise money, deliver aid, and fund virus research. Within twenty years of its formation, the March of Dimes, thanks to the work of Jonas Salk, MD, and Albert Sabin, MD, created vaccines that effectively ended the polio epidemic in the United States; and

WHEREAS, once the Foundation achieved its initial goal, the March of Dimes shifted its focus to premature birth and birth defects in 1958; in its endeavor to develop a strategy to combat birth defects, the organization funded genetics research and established birth defects treatment centers in hospitals across the country; and

WHEREAS, as the March of Dimes developed its programs of research and education in the study of birth defects, it became apparent that these conditions and disorders were inextricably linked to the medical, social, and epidemiological circumstances of pregnancy itself; and

WHEREAS, by the 1970s, the Foundation's focus on prevention of birth defects and infant mortality began to encompass the problems of premature birth and low birth weight, and subsequently, the March of Dimes grants for medical services shifted to neonatal intensive care,

genetic counseling, and perinatal networks, and funds for statewide networks of intensive care for high-risk infants led in turn to grants for the training of medical professionals in prenatal evaluation and care of high-risk pregnancies; and

WHEREAS, throughout its history, the March of Dimes has led the way to discover the genetic causes of birth defects, to promote newborn screening, and to educate medical professionals and the public about best practices for healthy pregnancy; the Foundation has supported research for surfactant therapy to treat respiratory distress and helped initiate the system of regional neonatal intensive care for premature and sick babies; and

WHEREAS, since 2003, the organization's fight to save babies has been strongly characterized by its Prematurity Campaign; the rising incidence of premature birth has demanded action, and the March of Dimes has responded by initiating an intensive, multi-year campaign to raise awareness and find the causes of prematurity; and

WHEREAS, the March of Dimes is a proud advocate and champion for all babies, and it is fitting that this General Assembly applaud the Foundation for all it has achieved; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor and commend the administration, medical professionals, staff, and volunteers of the March of Dimes on the occasion of this preeminent organization's seventy-fifth anniversary. We applaud and salute these dedicated professionals and stalwart volunteers who daily endeavor to improve infant health and prevent premature birth and birth defects.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.